



# Geared for Success

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## The Emotionally Intelligent Servant Leader

Servant leadership is built upon self-awareness and selflessness. It is both a leadership philosophy and set of leadership practices. The term "servant leader" was first coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in an essay published in 1970. Much has been studied and written about servant leadership. In fact, many theories have been linked to it to explain the interactions of leaders and followers in work relationships.

Servant leadership is typically associated with a participative leadership style. It focuses on re-thinking the hierarchical relationship between leader and subordinate. Instead of leading by intimidation, power, force or title, servant leaders work through empathy, open communication, synergistic relationships and putting others' needs before their own. It requires having a specific mindset and cultivates a culture of trust. While most leaders operate with a focus on work first and people second, servant leaders operate from a healthy balance between the two.

Becoming a servant leader requires an "inward" and "outward" journey. Your "inward" journey involves knowing yourself-your strengths, fears, prejudices, beliefs and challenges. It also, requires cultivating your growth; accepting, recognizing, valuing and respecting differences in others; working to improve your challenges and having the inner strength to put others first. The "outward" journey means becoming a change agent for your organization and a role model for servant principles.

Both journeys require the competencies of Emotional Intelligence. In fact, while servant leadership is about a philosophy and its practices. Emotional Intelligence encompasses the competencies that



can make it happen. Each of the Realms of Emotional Intelligence -- **Self-Perception, Self-Expression, Interpersonal, Decision making and Stress Management** -- contribute to the success of the servant leader. Increasing your emotional intelligence aids in the critical practices of active listening, self-awareness, collaboration, empathy and interpersonal relationship building needed for servant leadership.

According to Robert Greenleaf's work, the principles central to the development of a servant leader are:

- **Listening** - paying attention to what other people are saying while stopping the flow of your own internal messages
- **Empathy** - Understanding others' feelings and perspectives

- **Healing** - Fostering the emotional wholeness of others
- **Awareness** - Understanding your own thoughts and actions as they affect others
- **Persuasion** - Seeking compromise and harmony without coercion- "sells instead of tells"
- **Conceptualization** - Looking beyond daily challenges and tasks to future possibilities
- **Foresight** - Having a well developed sense about how the past, present and future are connected-thinks long term
- **Stewardship** - Making other people's needs your first priority- Thinks "you" not "me"
- **Commitment to the Growth of People** - Being responsible for the personal and professional development of people in the organization

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**"Servant leadership is all about making the goals clear and then rolling your sleeves up and doing whatever it takes to help people win. In that situation, they don't work for you, you work for them."**

Ken Blanchard



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## The Emotionally Intelligent Servant Leader

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- **Building Community** - Facilitating the interpersonal relationships that bring organizations and people together

Leaders find that using their emotional intelligence to implement the principles of servant leadership has many advantages, some direct, some indirect. Greater employee care typically equates to employees offering better customer service. A more open, collaborative workplace leads to greater implementation of change and innovation. Empowerment and respect yield better employee performance and productivity. The investment in the needs of employees provides organizations with less attrition, a smarter workforce and more loyalty. But, best of all, the servant leader is a role model for future leaders in the organization.

Servant leadership evolves over time. To begin the journey, concentrate on integrating and using the fifteen competencies of emotional intelligence on a conscious basis. Developing your empathy (e.g. listening skills), self-awareness, interpersonal relationships and social responsibility competencies are good places to start. For some leaders shifting from tasks to the people who do the tasks may be necessary. The key will be a focus on influencing, encouraging, collaborating and seeking out the growth of team members. Being present and committed to your team will help drive you into a healthy servant leadership role.

Resource: [Becoming a Servant Leader - A Workbook for Bringing Skill and Spirit to Professional and Personal Life](#), by Rayna Schroeder, Jackie Bahn-Henkelman and Jim Henkelman-Bahn

**"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant."**

Max De Pree

## Shhhh...Using Silence as a Leader

Leaders fulfill many different roles throughout their day. These roles require tactful, strong communication skills. While many leaders understand the importance of verbal and non-verbal skills, the use of silence may be just as powerful. When silence is used strategically, leaders are viewed as more effective, measured and willing to listen. In the book, [High Octane Women - How Superachievers Can Avoid Burnout](#), the author Sherrie Bourg Carter points out situations where silence can work to your advantage as a leader.

- **After you say something very important.** Silence gives your audience a chance to process what was said and the time to remember it. When punctuated with silence, your words will have more impact.
- **When you want to learn more about one of your team members, a peer, your boss or a customer.** As you know, the best way to learn is to stop talking. However, even a few seconds of silence can feel uncomfortable. So, use nonverbal gestures and expressions to show interest that keeps him/her talking. Avoid jumping in when there is a slight pause, other than to ask another question. Focus your attention on understanding someone's meaning instead of formulating your response.



- **When someone needs to vent.** When people are distressed, quite often they are just seeking someone to listen. Leaders often go into the problem solving mode to quickly find a solution. However, being the "sounding board" instead of the problem solver enables the individual to discover their own answers. Often times the individual will know what to do, simply by saying it aloud.
- **When you are angry.** Being angry greatly increases the chances that you will say something you will later regret. Stop yourself (EQ Impulse Control). Most people view situations differently once they are in a calmer mindset. Take the time to think things through.
- **When negotiations are stalled.** When a resolution is nowhere in sight with the same arguments being made over and over, silence is a possible tactic. It creates an awkward time when the opposition may come up with a new idea or position.
- **When you tactfully want others on the team to speak.** Silence from the leader permits others on the team closer to the situation speak first. It enables you to foster open communication by listening and learning.

Using silence strategically is helpful for keeping the communication channels open, enhancing information flow and building relationships.

**"The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause."**

Mark Twain

## Creating Your Career Strategy

Successful leaders focus on the challenge of realizing their full potential and performing in extraordinary ways. This requires being involved in pursuits that can lead to meaningful, rich and full experiences, accurate self-appraisal, maximum development of competencies and following their passions. The dynamic process of striving to be best is one of the fifteen competencies of Emotional Intelligence called, "Self-Actualization". Self-Actualization leads to greater happiness, personal satisfaction and goal fulfillment.

Self-Actualization at work often comes in the form of a career strategy by asking-- What is next for me? What skills do I need to move forward in my career? What are my passions? How can I contribute best? On average career professionals work approximately 90,000 hours in their lifetime, so finding the answers to these questions is critical. Studies have shown that people who derive meaning from their profession are more resilient and satisfied in their lives.

Having a career strategy provides a liberating way to look at your past, present and future. Career planning is the best way to create your strategy. Below are some tips for successful career planning.

- **Reflect on your career direction regularly.** Don't wait until an annual review from your boss. You own your life and career. Think about where you are, where you want to be and how you are going to get there.
- **Think about the 4 C's.** Do you still have confidence, conviction, contribution and a culture fit with your current job? If so, you will be experiencing feelings of recognition, pride and trust in the organization. If not, is it time to move on?
- **Do you find purpose in your work?** Tap back to the true purpose of your job. What brought you there in the first place? Are you able to still find excitement in the everyday tasks and future of the mission?
- **Map your path since the last career planning session.** What has helped you move ahead? What new skills have you learned? What committees have you served on? What projects have you taken on?
- **Look beyond your current job at your transferable skills.** What other possibilities are within your reach?
- **Explore new training/education opportunities.** Take the time to investigate training and education classes that will further your career or deepen your skill levels.
- **Develop a social circle.** Many enriching opportunities arise from communicating within relationships. Reach out to others inside and outside your organization. What professional organizations do you attend on a regular basis? How up-to-date is your LinkedIn profile?
- **Up isn't the only way.** Look across in your organization to become a more valuable player and broaden your knowledge.
- **Observe other leaders in your organization that are standouts.** What path did they take to achieve success?
- **Challenge yourself.** Intensify your involvement. Stay focused in your current position. What else could you and your team do to bring it to the next level?
- **Be curious.** Learn from others. Listen carefully.
- **Is it time for realignment?** Are you doing what you love? Life is too short to be in a job that you are unhappy with. Contemplate the right path for you and decide how you will get there.

The most important factor in career planning is to be persistent and not give up. Set your goals and live by them. In life, obstacles can temporarily get in the way, but don't get discouraged. You have talents and abilities that make you unique and valuable--leverage them!

Resource: "10 Tips for Successful Career Planning: An Activity for Job-Seekers of All Ages", by Dr. Randall Hansen

**"Find your passion and follow it. That is the only career advice you will ever need."**

John C. Maxwell

## Countering Your Own Negativity

As you know, optimism is an important competency for moving your team through change, finding solutions and just plain making the workplace a great place to be. If you find yourself in a negative slump, use the following techniques for mastering your negative thoughts and feelings.

1. **Listening In** -- Train yourself to "hear" what you are thinking. What is your self-talk saying?
2. **Underlining** -- Select the specific words in your internal dialogue that are detrimental to you and your team's interests.
3. **Stopping** -- Shut off your negative words. Make a point of consciously stopping negative words from becoming part of your thought process.
4. **Switching** -- Interrupt your harmful speech by substituting positive words.
5. **Reorienting** -- Change the thrust of your thinking to an active problem solving mode.

Resource: SkillPath, Inc.

## What Does It Mean to Feedforward?

As you know, coaching is a powerful method for increasing productivity, enhancing performance and building morale. The way in which you provide feedback during a coaching session is critical for helping others achieve their career goals. For your next coaching sessions try the Feedforward Method. Using this method involves focusing on the promise of the future instead of the mistakes of the past.

Feedback is generally associated with criticisms and assessing the past. Marshall Goldsmith and Jon Katzenbach coined the term "feedforward" to encourage leaders to spend coaching time creating the future. Feedforward meetings are collaborative and explore "what went right", "what was learned" and "how to make it even better". Below are some typical questions used during a feedforward meeting:

- "What do you feel was the most important thing you learned?"
- "You're biggest insight and success during this project was...?"
- "What did you learn about \_\_\_\_\_?"
- "What could you do to make it even better next time?"



Feedforward offers a way to reflect, rethink situations and uncover knowledge and learning. It helps you partner with your staff to seek what is needed for the future.

Resource: Multiple Leadership Intelligence,  
by Robert Edmonson

**"When you ask for feedback, you not only find out how others see you, you influence how they see you. Soliciting constructive feedback communicates humility, respect, passion for excellence, and confidence."**

"Find the Coaching in Criticism - The Right Ways to Receive Feedback",  
by Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone, HBR, January-February, 2014

## Try Brainwriting at Your Next Meeting

Are you tired of brainstorming, but in need of ideas and solutions? Sick of the same people dominating the meeting? It will probably come as no surprise that in a typical 6-8 person group, three people do 70% of the talking. In fact, that translates into less than 4 minutes of floor time for each of the remaining participants during an hour long meeting. And, unfortunately, those three people may not even notice that they are dominating the meeting.

Leigh Thompson, author of "Creative Conspiracy: The New Rules of Breakthrough Collaboration" suggests a technique for fostering team democracy called "brainwriting".

Brainwriting involves simultaneous written generation of ideas. Here are the steps to make it work:



1. Start with your problem or issue. Write in on a flip chart, white board or power point presentation slide.
2. Distribute 1 or 2 index cards per meeting participant.
3. Have each participant write down one good idea or proposed solution on the index card or sticky note- preferably in one sentence. Offer about 5 minutes for this portion of the brainwriting to be done.
4. Consider the idea, not the source. When time is up, all cards are submitted anonymously and taped on the wall. There are two rules: No guessing and no confessions-as no names should be listed on the cards.
5. Next, put the ideas to vote. This is done by giving each participant a limited amount of stickers to place on the cards. The best ideas will have the most stickers.



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